

K-8 Traffic Safety Education Resolution Montana Board of Public Education

Approved by the Montana Board of Public Education on May 8, 2008

Improving Traffic Safety Education in Montana Schools for Young Highway and Street Users as Passengers, Pedestrians, Bicyclists and Future Young Drivers

WHEREAS, the leading cause of death for age groups 1 – 44 is by traffic crashes, and the leading cause of unintentional injury caused deaths for age groups 1 – 64 is traffic crashes (source: Center's for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]); and

WHEREAS, traffic crashes are within the top 7 causes of injuries treated in hospitals for age groups 5 – 14 and in the top 4 causes of injuries treated in hospitals for age groups 15 – 65+ (source: CDC); and

WHEREAS, in 2006, 8 Montana children ages 5 – 14 died and 563 were injured as a result of traffic crashes; and 27 Montana teens ages 15-19 died and 1,769 were injured as a result of traffic crashes (source: Montana Department of Transportation [MDT] Traffic Safety Problem Identification [ID]); and

WHEREAS, in 2006, 25 Montana children in the 5 – 14 age group either died or were seriously injured as pedestrians hit by a motor vehicle, (Source MDT Traffic Safety Problem ID); and

WHEREAS, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for the age group 2 – 14 and 43% of school age pedestrian fatalities occur between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, safety studies have identified key school pedestrian and traffic safety issues including

- (1) unsafe routes to school,
- (2) speeding/reckless driving in school zones,
- (3) unsafe parking and drop-off/pick-up practices,
- (4) school bus loading zone conflicts and double parking,
- (5) unclear school area signs and crosswalks with low visual impact and recognition,
- (6) poorly maintained/faded crosswalks and signs,
- (7) utility construction and street/public works hazards,
- (8) inadequate crossing guard program funding,
- (9) lack of sustainable school safety education/staff training, and
- (10) inconsistent enforcement and parking control intervention

(California 2001 PTA Resolution); and

WHEREAS, the need for traffic engineering, new safety technologies, education outreach, and the enforcement of safe driving laws are recognized by safety experts as vital to improving safe routes to and from schools by reducing hazards and increasing student, community, and motorist awareness; and

WHEREAS, bicycle helmets, safety belt use, child safety seats, comprehensive injury prevention curricula, local and state level policies and resolutions are all proven injury prevention strategies; and

WHEREAS, school environments provide an excellent opportunity to incorporate research based education and behavioral strategies designed to develop positive decision making skills in children; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a host of national professional safety organizations all support some form of safe passages to school, and the Montana Department of Transportation has provided funding for Safe Routes to Schools in local Montana communities and technical support of those projects; and

WHEREAS, the vision of the Montana Board of Public Education includes the constitutionally-expressed "goal of the people to establish a system of public education which will develop the full educational potential of each person," and reaching the full potential of each student requires students to be healthy, safe and as free as possible from the risk of injury and death; and

WHEREAS, an established health enhancement standard of the Montana Board of Public Education for the end of grade 4 is for the student to identify personal health enhancing strategies that encompass substance abuse, nutrition, exercise, injury/disease prevention, and stress management (Health Enhancement Standard 1); and

WHEREAS Montana's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan calls for revitalizing efforts to encourage K-8 Traffic Safety Education in elementary and middle schools as a long term means of preparing teens to drive before entering into driver education.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: The Montana Board of Public Education supports continued development and implementation of injury prevention education for all students in Montana schools in conjunction with strategies that encompass environmental and regulatory approaches; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: The Montana Board of Public Education supports a balanced approach to the implementation of proven strategies that recognize the magnitude of the problem of traffic safety, intentional and unintentional injuries; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: The Montana Board of Public Education is committed to improving collaboration with other national organizations, federal and state agencies and local communities on this critical issue of traffic safety education for young vehicle passengers, bicycle riders, pedestrians and future drivers; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: The Montana Board of Public Education endorses the provision of traffic education activities for K-8 students in Montana schools to provide age appropriate traffic safety training for age related mobility and use of the highway transportation system and the streets and roads of our cities, towns and communities, through a locally developed education strategy.

Distributed by



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